



North Central Idaho News

CLEARWATER, IDAHO, LATAH, LEWIS & NEZ PERCE COUNTIES

ECONOMIC TRENDS

The Lewiston Metropolitan Statistical Area's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in May decreased to 3.2 percent from April's 3.8 percent as shown in North Central Idaho Table 1. In May 2006 the rate was 4.5 percent. Nonfarm payroll jobs in May increased by 350 from April. The increase reflected job gains in government, mostly for road and park maintenance and construction.

COVERED EMPLOYERS

About 92 percent of employers in Idaho are subject to the state unemployment insurance law and are known as covered employers. Since 2001, the number of employers has increased in north central Idaho as shown in North Central Idaho Table 2. In 2006, new employers throughout the region were small with fewer than five employees. By county, over the last five years, Latah attracted the most new employers, concentrated in the construction, accommodations and food service sectors. In the rest of the region, Idaho County's new employers could be found in the manufacturing, wholesale trade and real estate sectors. Lewis County attracted new employers in construction while Clearwater County's new employers were concentrated in trade and the hospitality and leisure sectors. Nez Perce County's new employers emerged in construction, finance, insurance and technical assistance.

AREA DEVELOPMENTS

IDAHO & LEWIS COUNTIES

- Idaho County will receive more than \$900,000 this year from the federal government to compensate for forgone tax revenue. Under the federal Payments in Lieu of Taxes program, funds are distributed to about 1,850 local governments whose jurisdictions contain tax-exempt federal lands. For fiscal year 2007, Idaho County received \$907,143. The U.S. Interior De-

North Central Idaho Table 1: Lewiston MSA Labor Force & Employment
Nez Perce County, Idaho and Asotin County, Washington

	May 2007*	Apr 2007	May 2006	% Change From	
				Last Month	Last Year
INDIVIDUALS BY PLACE OF RESIDENCE					
<i>Seasonally Adjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,170	30,310	29,340	-0.5	2.8
Unemployment	980	1,140	1,330	-14.0	-26.3
% of Labor Force Unemployed	3.2	3.8	4.5		
Total Employment	29,190	29,170	28,010	0.1	4.2
<i>Unadjusted</i>					
Civilian Labor Force	30,080	30,360	29,240	-0.9	2.9
Unemployment	780	1,170	1,120	-33.3	-30.4
% of Labor Force Unemployed	2.6	3.9	3.8		
Total Employment	29,300	29,190	28,120	0.4	4.2
JOBS BY PLACE OF WORK					
Nonfarm Payroll Jobs** - NAICS	28,130	27,780	27,710	1.3	1.5
<i>Goods-Producing Industries</i>	4,850	4,720	4,740	2.8	2.3
Natural Resources & Mining	210	170	200	23.5	5.0
Construction	1,580	1,500	1,450	5.3	9.0
Manufacturing	3,060	3,050	3,090	0.3	-1.0
Wood Product Manufacturing	540	530	550	1.9	-1.8
Paper Manufacturing	1,090	1,090	1,110	0.0	-1.8
Other Manufacturing	1,430	1,430	1,430	0.0	0.0
<i>Service-Providing Industries</i>	23,280	23,060	22,970	1.0	1.3
Trade, Transportation & Utilities	5,460	5,400	5,420	1.1	0.7
Wholesale Trade	670	680	640	-1.5	4.7
Retail Trade	3,550	3,500	3,560	1.4	-0.3
Utilities	90	90	90	0.0	0.0
Transportation & Warehousing	1,150	1,130	1,130	1.8	1.8
Information	420	420	410	0.0	2.4
Financial Activities	2,050	2,020	1,980	1.5	3.5
Professional & Business Services	1,630	1,610	1,610	1.2	1.2
Education & Health Services	4,500	4,540	4,430	-0.9	1.6
Leisure & Hospitality	2,560	2,550	2,610	0.4	-1.9
Other Services	1,160	1,160	1,140	0.0	1.8
Government Education	2,600	2,620	2,570	-0.8	1.2
Government Administration	2,150	2,000	2,090	7.5	2.9
Government Tribes	750	740	710	1.4	5.6

*Preliminary Estimate

**Full- or part-time jobs of people who worked for or received wages in the pay period including the 12th of the month

North Central Idaho Table 2: Number of Covered Employers by County & Year

County/Area	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	Change from 2001-2006
CLEARWATER	345	339	343	338	343	339	-6
IDAHO	569	567	576	578	588	618	49
LATAH	976	951	982	1,007	1,028	1,072	96
LEWIS	175	175	174	174	183	190	15
NEZ PERCE	1,310	1,298	1,286	1,292	1,318	1,321	12
North Central	3,374	3,329	3,361	3,389	3,460	3,540	166

partment collects about \$4 billion annually in revenues from commercial activities on federal lands, such as oil and gas leasing, livestock grazing and timber harvesting. A portion of these revenues go to counties as reimbursement for government services related to public safety, housing, social services, transportation and the environment. The annual payments are based on population and the number of acres of federal land in each county or jurisdiction.

- Potlatch Number One Federal Credit Union based in Lewiston has opened a branch office in Grangeville with three full-time employees.

LATAH COUNTY

- Rainstorms in June were considered "million-dollar rains" by farmers because of the moisture they provided at just the right time. Washington State University Extension agronomist John Burns said that after experiencing increasingly hot weather in late May and early June and dry weather since then, crops were drying out. He said the rains in late June were particularly important to winter wheat. In June, the heads of winter wheat plants are filling out with kernels, and adequate moisture is critical for a good yield. Rainfall for the area has been low this year. From March 1 to June 8, the Palouse region received only 3.74 inches of moisture, said Ron Miller, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Spokane. Over the last 30 years the region has averaged 5.44 inches during the same period.
- The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in June that expected winter wheat harvest for Idaho farmers is 740,000 acres with an expected yield of 81 bushels per acre. Last year, the harvest was 710,000 acres at 77 bushels per acre. Joe Anderson, Idaho Wheat Commission District 1 commissioner in Potlatch, said winter wheat prices increased from \$3.21 per bushel in 2005 to \$4.35 in 2006. The current national average price for June was \$6.31-\$6.33, according to the Portland Daily Grain Report. Joseph R. Anderson, a Genesee-area farmer and Latah County director for the Idaho Grain Producers, said the large wheat acreage also resulted from normal crop rotation. "If you plant more wheat, that means there might be less of another crop," he said. If the harvest comes out as good as forecasted, the farmers' high production could mean increased sales for other businesses. "If we have more bushels to sell, it'll be good for the local economy," Joseph Anderson said. "That's good for the local auto dealers and machinery dealers, even household goods." He said most farmers have lists of needs and wants, and when production and prices are high, they start buying things off the wants list.
- Summer operations at the University of Idaho are pivotal to recruitment, retention and revenue. Summer programs such as Life on Wheels RV conference and the Olympic Development Program for girls' soccer are bringing in more than \$1.2 million. Coordinator Doug

Vandenboom works year round to organize the 30 to 40 different groups that come in during the summer. Vandenboom isn't surprised people sometimes miss the large groups that come through. A lot of the activities are isolated to campus. "There's a misconception that the residence halls are empty in the summer when students are gone, but we actually see about 5,000 youth in the summer," he said. The colleges and departments draw in students with specialized programs for science and engineering, journalism and theatre. The athletic department camps draw athletes for basketball, football and volleyball. Still more students come to participate with the Future Farmers of America, Upward Bound and 4-H.

NEZ PERCE COUNTY

- Construction on Nez Perce County's new jail in north Lewiston has started and is expected to take about 18 months. The entire project, including architects, a turn bay and an access road built to city standards is expected to cost as much as \$21 million, including contingency funds for unanticipated changes. The construction bid on the 156-bed jail was \$16.34 million by Swank Enterprises of Kalispell, Mont. That doesn't include purchase of the 10-acre parcel from the Port of Lewiston, outfitting a \$400,000 kitchen and various architectural, financial and consulting fees.
- ATK's Lewiston plant is so busy that employees at all levels are subject to mandatory overtime while those in management are devoting extra time to expanding the plant's capacity and other initiatives, says Marty Zacha, the company's new director of Lewiston operations. Zacha, who started June 1, is the fourth man to hold the position since ATK acquired CCI/Speer in 2001. He expects to work through the hiccups that come with the Lewiston plant's success. "The Lewiston plant is doing excellent," says Zacha. "Volumes are very good. Business is at an all-time high. The future looks very promising for that to continue." The number of employees has grown by about 130 to 830 since the Lewiston ammunition maker became a part of ATK, and it continues to add workers at the rate of about 10 per month, including hires that fill openings created by retirements. The sources of business are diverse. ATK makes .22- and .17-caliber rim fire that is used mostly for target or varmint shooting with rifles or pistols; center-fire pistol ammunition for law enforcement; primers, which are the part of the ammunition that ignites cartridges; and powerloads, which are like .22-caliber blanks that are used to drive nails or other fasteners in construction. Primers made in Lewiston supply the factory there and ATK operations in Lake City and Anoka, Minn.

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